



Canadian Centre for Men and Families-York Region
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York Region Police Services Board
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Dear York Region Police Services Board Members,

Happy New Year and I hope you all had a wonderful Holiday Season.

CCMF-York was established in the York Region in December 2019 as an inclusive charitable mental health agency in order to help close the gap in services for men and their families who experience life challenges, in a safe and welcoming space. The vast majority of our clients are male victims of IPV and our agency is the only one in this region which specializes in helping this vulnerable population. We regularly receive referrals from major social agencies here and we believe both female and male of IPV victims deserve support and safety.

On behalf of the **Canadian Centre for Men and Families-York Region (CCMF-York)** I would like to bring to your attention the following concerns regarding how the York Region Police (**YRP**) responds to domestic violence situations where the victim is male and the perpetrator is female, and how allegations of intimate partner violence (**IPV**) are handled. This letter is a follow up from the meeting with Chairman Emerson on June 12th, 2020.

Concerns about how police handle IPV incidents in York Region

In speaking to our clients, a number of concerns have been raised. Additionally, we have reached out to a number of law firms and they have confirmed that they frequently see these issues in their practices as well. These concerns include:

- When experiencing IPV by their violent partner, these men are afraid to call the police for the fear of being arrested instead.
- When the IPV was instigated by the violent partner (female partner hits first) and our clients try to defend themselves by physically restraining their partner, that counts as an assault and they are arrested instead and not the violent partner.
- When the IPV has been bidirectional, the male partner is more likely to get arrested.
- When female partner has been the only violent partner and police are called, the male partner is arrested instead (double victimization).



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- When there is no physical evidence of wrongdoing, only the female partner's account is considered in arresting the male partner. False accusations are accepted as a form of IPV (administrative form of IPV) and is reported regularly by our clients.
- Male partner is arrested when actually the female partner is violent and she remains with the children. Clients are worried about the safety of their children.
- Child custody court order is not respected by the spouse (she removes the child during his allotted time) or relocates without the telling the partner the child's new location, and police do not enforce the court order.

Prevalence of IPV by gender in York Region and police response: Data from York Region Police

In order to get a better gauge of prevalence of IPV victimization among men in York Region and how police here handle these cases, we approached the YRP for data on incidence of IPV by gender and year as well as data regarding those charged of IPV, by gender and year (YRP FOI data, Appendix 1). We would like to thank the YRP, Freedom of Information Unit Supervisor Ms. Janet Ryland and Planning & Research Statistician Mr. Das Swapan for their promptness in providing these data and responsiveness in follow up queries. Figures 1 (IPV victimization), 2 (IPV charges) and 3 (bidirectional IPV) depict these data. They consistently show approximately 20% of police reported IPV victims are men and 80% are women. Subsequently 80% of those charged are men versus 20% women, and in about 4% of cases both partners are charged.

Prevalence of IPV by gender, National Statistics Canada Data

However, the YRP data are inconsistent with the more rigorous Statistics Canada data from the 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization (n= 14,576, please see Figure 4 for comparison of these two data sets). Analysis of this survey by leading IPV experts in a peer-reviewed journal (ref. 1) has found the following:

- 2.9% of men (63% of total victims) and 1.7% of women (37% of total victims) in their current relationship have been a victim of physical IPV in the past 5 years.
 - This translates to 1,370 men and 800 women (total 2,170) on an annual basis in the York Region (based on the population of 1.1M and adjusting for gender ratios and age demographics as per Statistics Canada).



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- 1.1% of men and 0.5% of women in their current relationship have been a victim of a severe form of intimate partner physical violence (being choked, kicked, slapped or dangerous objects thrown at) in the past 5 years.
- 35% of male and 34% female victims of IPV were found to have experienced high controlling behaviours-the most severe form of abuse known as intimate terrorism.
- 22% of male and 19% of female victims of IPV were found to have experienced severe physical violence along with high controlling behaviour.
- Male and Female victims were equally affected by long-term trauma as the result of spousal IPV.

Current understanding of gender symmetry of IPV perpetration from academic research

In terms of gender symmetry of IPV, the largest study (n=14,252, ref 2, also please see ref 3 for review article on this topic) of its kind has found the following (Figure 5):

- 51% of IPV is bidirectional.
- 33% of IPV is perpetrated by females only.
- 16% of IPV is perpetrated by males only.

According to this research, YRP data regarding the large gender gap in who is charged in IPV situations (80% male partner versus 20% female partner) is inconsistent with the largely symmetrical pattern of who perpetrates IPV violence.

Concluding remarks

- 1) Considering
 - i) The experience of our clients,
 - ii) The feedback from a number of established law firms, and
 - iii) The disconnect between YRP data (much higher percentage of IPV victims who are female and much higher percentage of perpetrators who are male) and national data from Statistics Canada (somewhat higher ratio of males as IPV victims), we are concerned the cases where the IPV victim are male are not treated by YRP equally as when the victims are female.
- 2) When someone is charged, it has severe and long-term consequences on their mental and financial well-being as well as their future lives. It can be a devastating and life changing experience. Their children are also negatively affected to a great extent when they lose their father. We are concerned police treat allegations of IPV unequally when the perpetrator is female than when it is a male.



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- 3) Given the provincial regulations on mandatory charging the dominant aggressor in a domestic abuse setting, we are concerned the definition of aggressor may be applied incorrectly in a large number of IPV cases where the victim is male and the perpetrator is female.
- 4) There is a lack of awareness in the general public,
 - a) About the prevalence of IPV victimization in men
 - b) On how to support male victims of IPV when they need help from the abusive partner,
 - c) That there are persistent and out-dated gender stereotypes on IPV victimization. These include:
 - i) Size difference is an indication of who the dominant aggressor is,
 - ii) The partner with the greater expression of emotion is always the victim,
 - iii) Testimony of one gender should carry more weight than that of the other in determining who is the perpetrator.
 - iv) We are concerned that these out-dated gender stereotypes may influence how police respond to domestic violence incidents in York Region and the YRP officers may not be specifically trained on how to handle domestic situations where the victim is male and the perpetrator is female.

Proposal

We would like to propose the following in order to ensure all citizens in York Region would feel safe and treated fairly should they be involved in a domestic incident.

1. There should be a review of procedures to better understand what is driving this large gap in identifying male and female victims and perpetrators in the York Region since more comprehensive data present a different picture than the YRP data show.
2. As part of YRP domestic abuse training, a module to be included on how to better understand and assess the dynamics of domestic abuse cases where the male is a victim. This training needs to be done by an educator who understands the dynamics of male IPV victimization and equally cares about both male and female IPV victims. CCMF-York routinely provides this training to frontline social agencies in the York Region.
3. YRP data shown in this report (Appendix 1) is to be made available to CCMF-York on an annual basis free of charge.
4. YRP and CCMF-York collaborate to raise awareness regarding IPV victimization of men and help to improve the current out-dated gender stereotypes of IPV.

We believe the women and men who serve in the YRP are dedicated individuals who care about the community and they do their best when called on the domestic



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situations given their mandate and training. Given the long journey we have come in gender equality in our society, it is critical we do our best to ensure equality in all aspects of our community living, including support from the police. This is the only way York Region can remain being a caring community we all come to cherish.

On behalf of CCMF-York, I would like to thank the Police Services Board for hearing our concerns and we are looking forward to a response. If a follow-up meeting would be helpful for discussion, we are more than happy to attend.

Warm regards,

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Cc:

York Region Police Services Board Chair, Virginia Hackson
York Region CEO and Chair, Wayne Emerson
York Region Police Chief, Jim MacSween

References (attached)

1. Alexandra, L., Emeka, E. D., Dutton, D. 2019. Partner Abuse. 10:199-221.
2. Straus, M. A., Gozjolko, K. L. 2016. Concordance between partners in "intimate terrorism": A comparison of two typologies. Aggression and Violent Behavior. 29: 55-60.
3. Bates, E. 2016. Current Controversies within Intimate Partner Violence: Overlooking Bidirectional Violence. J. Fam. Viol. 31:937-940.

Percentage of IPV Victimization by Gender (YRP Data)

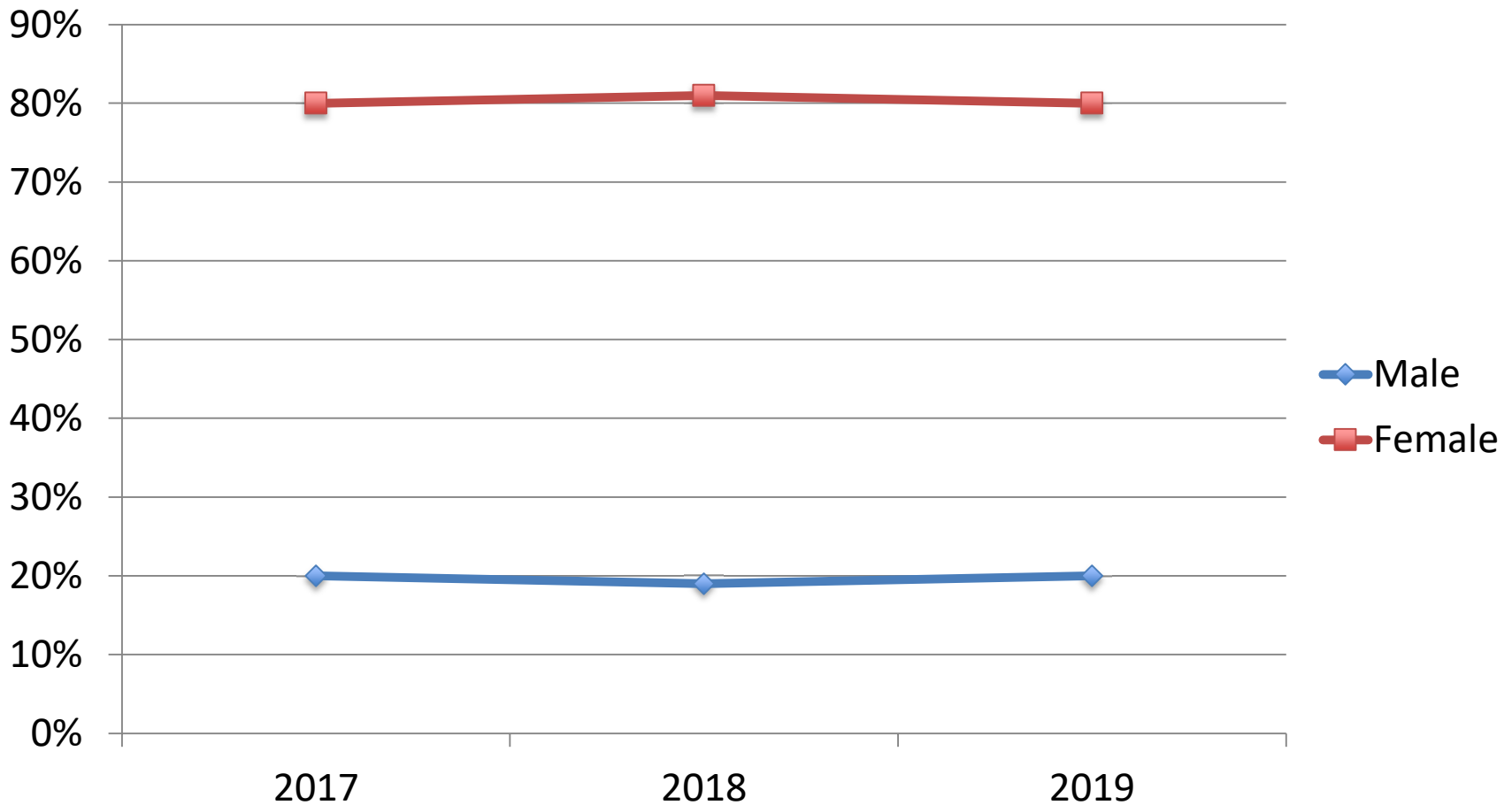


Figure 1

Percentage Charged for IPV by Gender (YRP Data)

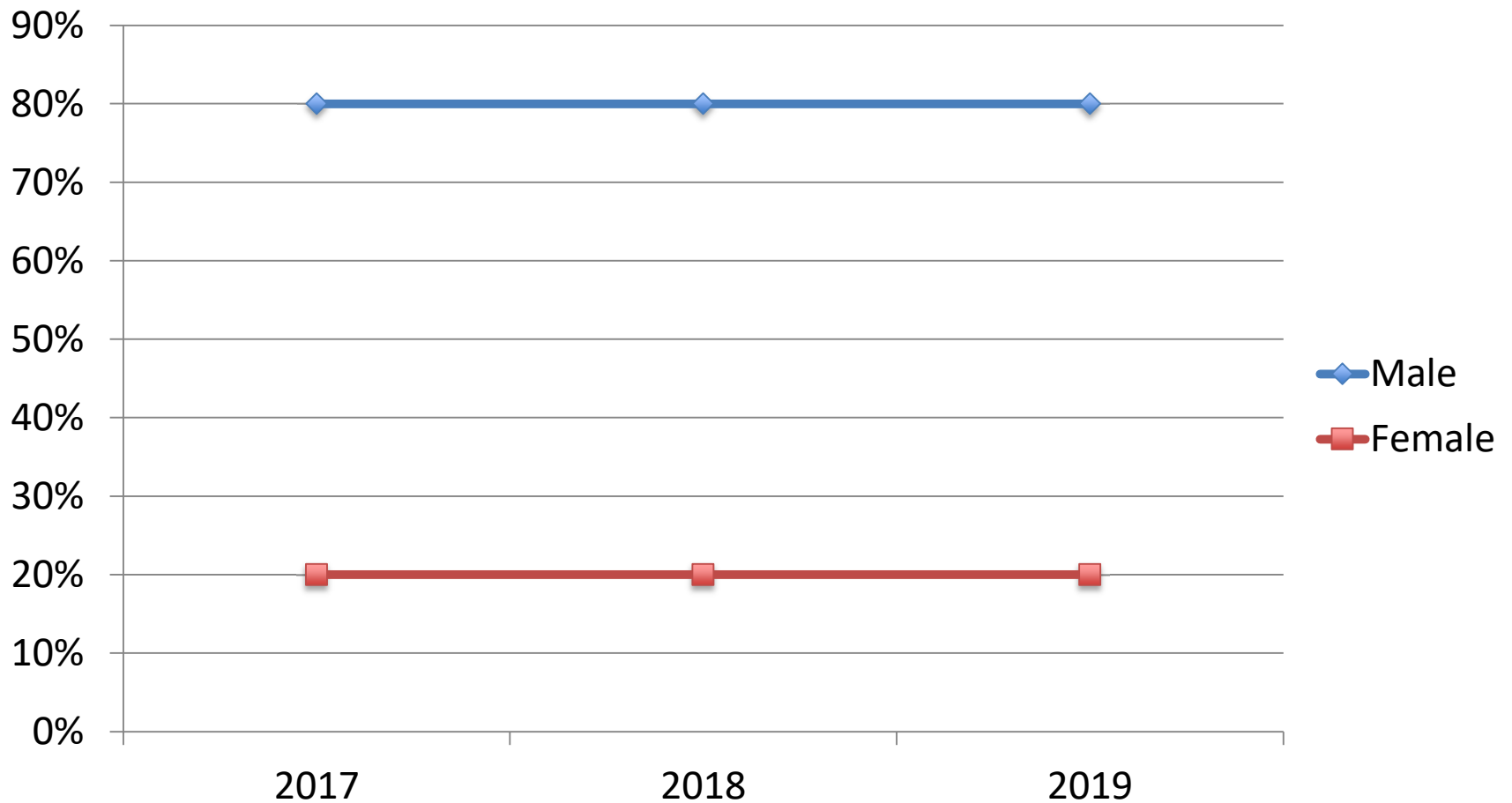


Figure 2

Percent of IPV Dual Charged (YRP Data)

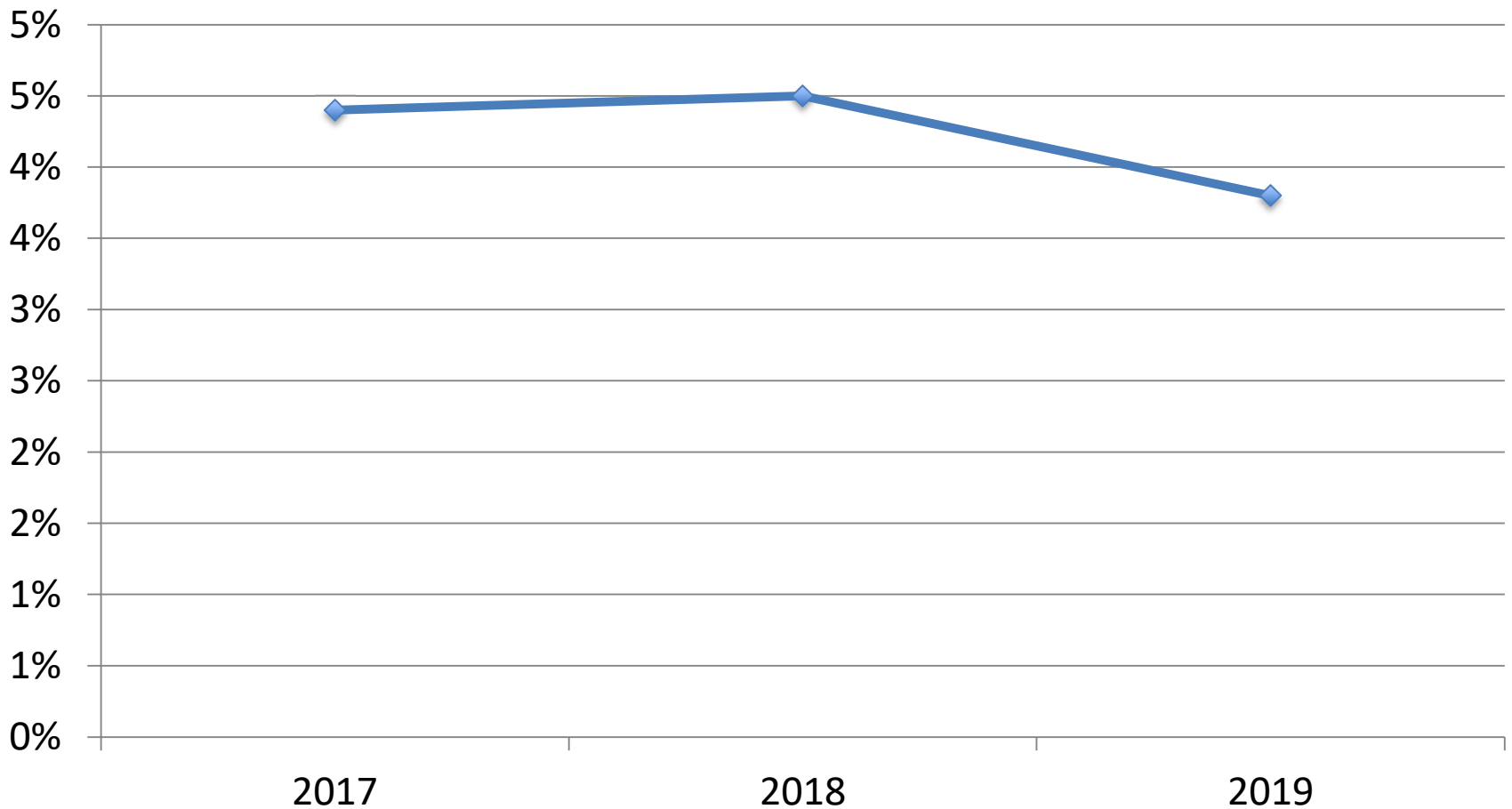
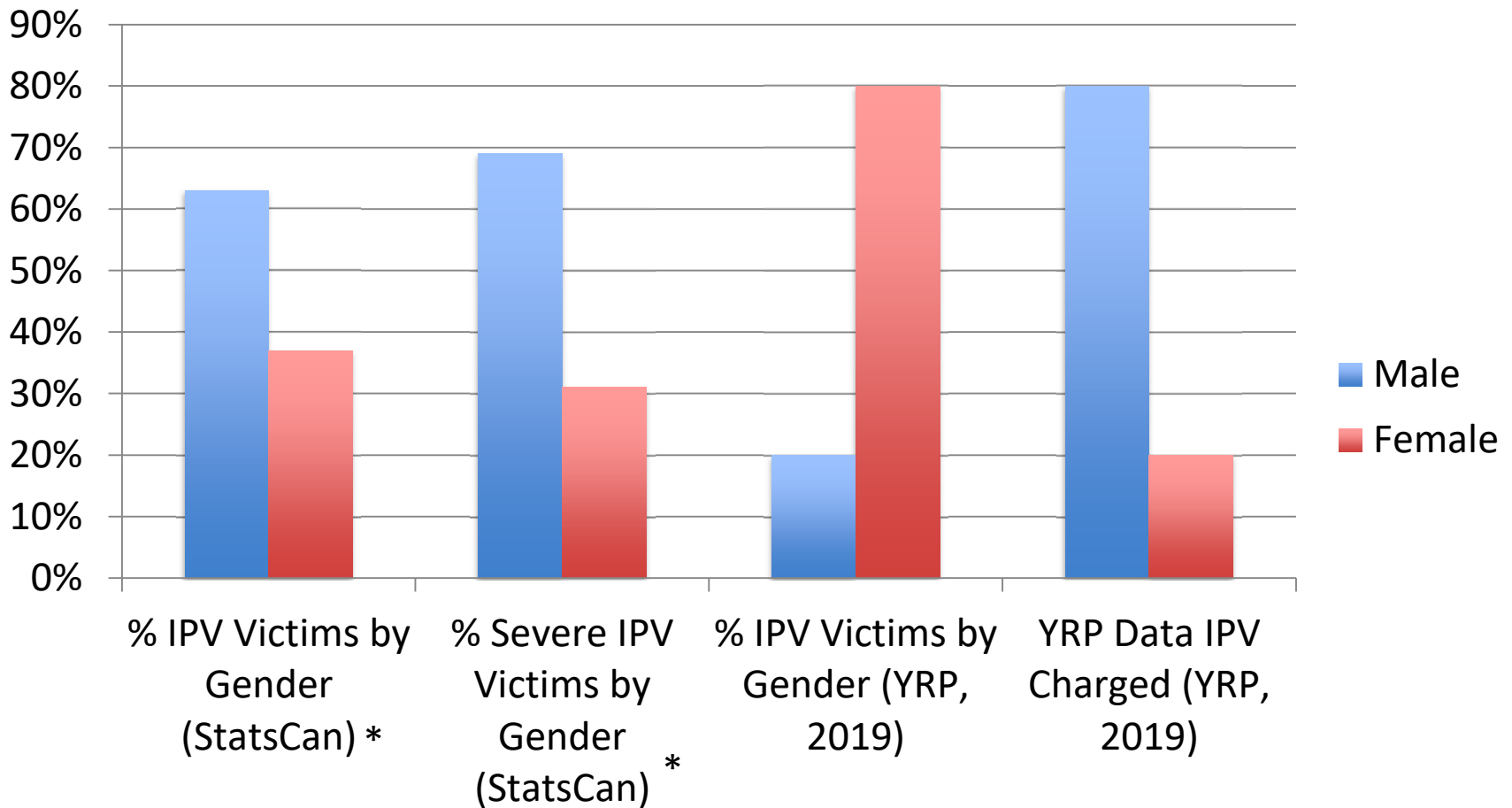


Figure 3

Disconnect Between York Region Police Data on IPV and Statistics Canada IPV Data



* Lysova et al, 2019

Figure 4

Gender Symmetry in IPV Perpetration

(Straus and Gozjolko, 2016, n=14,200)*

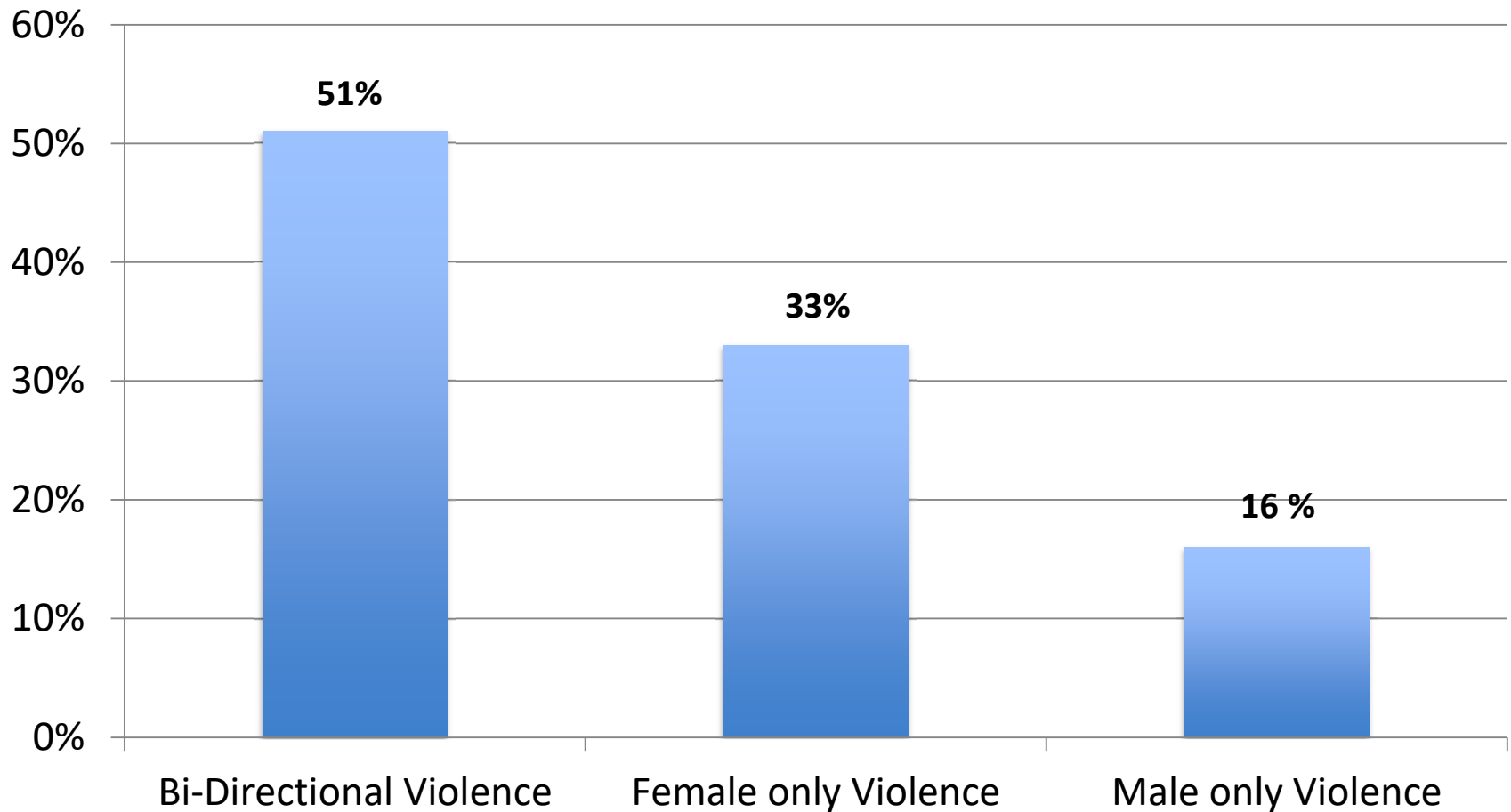


Figure 5